


Braille Monitor



JANUARY, 1979

VOICE OF THE NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND



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THE BRAILLE MONITOR

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NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND

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THE BRAILLE MONITOR

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THE NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND

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SUBSCRIPTION REQUESTS, AND ORDERS FOR NFB LITERATURE
SHOULD BE SENT TO THE NATIONAL OFFICE.

ARTICLES FOR THE MONITOR AND LETTERS TO THE EDITOR
SHOULD BE SENT TO THE WASHINGTON OFFICE.

DONALD McCONNELL, *Editor*

* * *

MONITOR SUBSCRIPTIONS COST THE FEDERATION ABOUT FIFTEEN DOLLARS A YEAR. MEMBERS ARE INVITED, AND NON-MEMBERS ARE REQUESTED, TO COVER THE SUBSCRIPTION COST. DUE TO ITS HIGH COST, BRAILLE IS AVAILABLE ONLY TO THE DEAF-BLIND AND THOSE WITH A SIMILARLY COMPELLING NEED FOR THAT MEDIUM. DONATIONS AND SUBSCRIPTION PAYMENTS SHOULD BE MADE PAYABLE TO NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND AND SENT TO:

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* * *

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* * *

THE NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND IS NOT AN ORGANIZATION
SPEAKING FOR THE BLIND—IT IS THE BLIND SPEAKING FOR THEMSELVES.

JONATHAN MAY DIES

by KENNETH JERNIGAN

On Saturday, October 28, in the afternoon, as Jon May set out from his home on Federation business, he was struck by a car, suffering what turned out to be fatal injuries. Several of his limbs were broken and he received head injuries. He was taken to the hospital in a coma. On December 1st Jonathan May died, never having regained consciousness. Thus for the second time this fall, we have lost a member of the NFB Board and a major leader of the movement.

At the request of his family, there was no public memorial service, but Federationists in the states where he lived and worked will mourn his death for years to come. In a way, this lack of public mourning was fitting, for Jon was a private person. He asked for no publicity, no recognition. Working quietly and steadily, he was as active as anyone in the movement and a leader wherever he was.

Born in 1944, Jon grew up in Connecticut. He graduated from college in 1966 and began a career in business administration until his sight began to fail in 1969 due to diabetic retinopathy. (He was from then on a leader in the American Diabetes Association as well as the Federation.) He was introduced to the NFB by Shirley Lebowitz, and by listening to records of NFB speeches and articles, became deeply committed to the Federation philosophy. As he wrote earlier this year: "In spite of the difficulties blind people still faced, I realized I was a beneficiary of the work of earlier Federationists whose sweat and sacrifice had obtained for me opportunities they never had. I realized I had an obligation to do all I could to advance the cause of the blind. I joined the NFB.

"At NFB national conventions I met blind consumers who gave me a wealth of knowledge and who, despite great diversity, maintained a common sense of purpose in the ultimate achievement of our goals of security, equality, and opportunity for all blind persons. The NAC demonstrations and NFB

national conventions demonstrated the spiritual essence of a true people's movement which has made the NFB the greatest social catalyst in bettering the lives of the blind in our country's history."

For Jon, these beliefs led to action. As Jim Gashel put it, "Jon was what a Federationist should be. He took up every NFB issue, decided what he could do to help, and set out to do it. He was extremely effective." As the files in the NFB Washington Office attest, Jon wrote more letters to Congress and to federal officials than any other person in the movement. He wrote not only to Connecticut Congressmen, but to the delegations from North Carolina (where he lived while seeking a degree in public health and later when he returned to take a job in that field) and Georgia as well. During visits to Washington, he helped develop relationships with Congressmen that were later essential in passing NFB-backed legislation, including the amendments to the Rehabilitation Act reported elsewhere in this issue.

When we were attempting to persuade the federal Office of Education to reconsider its recognition of NAC, Jon was almost singlehandedly responsible for preventing a last-minute agenda change that would have worked to NAC's advantage. He also kept the meeting held by the Office of Education staff from being closed to the public.

On the state level, he operated the same way—constantly contacting legislators and state officials, arranging meetings and opportunities for input from blind consumers. His main characteristics in all his work were constant outreach and quiet persistence. He would take as much time as was needed to get the NFB message across.

Nor was he active simply in the public area. If he heard about a blind person who needed assistance, he was on the phone at once, patiently explaining NFB philosophy and the need for collective action. He said once that many of the blind people he talked

to had given up. They either could not believe that being blind does not mean being shut out from normal life or they believed it was too late for them personally. Jon said this with some resignation, but that did not mean he gave up. The blind people who met him got a boost simply from talking to him.

Not that life was easy for Jon. Despite his degree in public health and his obvious intelligence, he found it extremely difficult to get work. On top of that his health became strained as his diabetes progressed, particularly since he refused to curtail his activity. In 1977, he found a job in North Carolina and he threw himself into it with such energy that in the spring of this year his health broke and he was forced to resign and move back to his parents' home in

Connecticut. But even then his Federation work continued at full strength.

We had the benefit of knowing Jonathan May for only a short time. At the age of 34, he had already accomplished much. It is always a tragedy when a man dies at the very beginning of his prime years. In Jon May's case, the loss goes further. The organized blind movement is immeasurably poorer for his death. On the other hand we are richer for his comradeship. He helped build the Federation in Connecticut and North Carolina; he helped advance our goals at the national level; and he left us with a pattern of what every Federationist should be.

To me personally, Jon's death is a grievous loss. He was my close friend as well as my colleague in the movement. □

THE REHABILITATION, COMPREHENSIVE SERVICES, AND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES AMENDMENTS OF 1978: NEW OPPORTUNITIES AND NEW CHALLENGES FOR THE BLIND

by JAMES GASHEL

Public Law 95-602, the Rehabilitation, Comprehensive Services, and Developmental Disabilities Amendments of 1978, was signed into law by President Carter on November 6, 1978. In the July *Monitor*, we reported on this legislation, highlighting those features of the Senate bill (S. 2600) which recognized the special needs of the blind by offering new legislative authority for programs which could better meet those needs. On September 21, S. 2600 passed the Senate by a vote of 81 to 1 (Senator Proxmire of Wisconsin being the only one to vote against it), and the stage was set for Senate and House conferees to meet to reconcile the differences between the Rehabilitation Act amending bills passed by the two bodies. The House bill had been passed in mid-May.

In many ways the Senate bill was a real triumph for the blind; for the legislation prepared by the NFB and designed to meet the reading needs of blind persons and the rehabilitation needs of older blind persons and to do all of this through specialized, identifiable agencies was all contained in title IV of the bill. In 1943 the Barden-

LaFollette Act substantially overhauled the vocational rehabilitation program and specifically offered states the option of designating separate agencies for the blind to administer the state's vocational rehabilitation program for blind persons; but there was no special additional money provided, just a splitting of the federal funds available. Even so, this was a major victory for the blind, and it has provided the legal foundation for our increasingly successful separate agency campaigns. This year we sought the special federal funding necessary to make up for inadequate services or no services at all; and the fact that these funds would be available only to states which had identifiable agencies for the blind would serve as an incentive for states to go the separate agency route.

At the federal level we are too often faced with the almost overwhelming impact of big government, which for the sake of simplicity, if not for empire-building, likes to blur the distinctions which in actual fact exist among groups of the disabled. Legislation, too, often contributes its bit to the

preference for amalgamating services to everyone under one giant umbrella. But if minorities with special needs—such as the blind—are to be heard, and if their special needs are to be taken into account, it will be done through the Congress and the state legislatures; and it will continue to require concerted action by the Federation as the leading force for change. The Senate bill proves this and it shows us all what can be accomplished.

On September 20, Senator Jennings Randolph of West Virginia, chairman of the Senate Subcommittee on the Handicapped, spoke on the Senate floor, describing the major provisions of S. 2600. His remarks concerning the new programs for the blind showed real understanding and a desire to be responsive to the NFB initiatives.

With respect to the need for rehabilitation services for older blind persons, Senator Randolph said in part: "The committee recognizes that older blind persons in the United States generally do not receive rehabilitation and adjustment services which are as complete as those provided to younger blind people who are in school or who are working. The comprehensive service needs study, which was set up by the Congress in the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 to determine the direction in which future rehabilitation services should go, stressed that care for the older blind was a neglected area. The committee has therefore prepared legislation addressing the special needs of the aged blind, and intends that the funds allocated be used to supplement rather than replace vocational rehabilitation resources which presently aid the older blind.

"In 1972 and 1973, Congress attempted to meet the needs of the older blind by supplying amendments to the Rehabilitation Act which were later compromised away because of a Presidential veto. However, in 1978, with the documentation of the Congress' own comprehensive service needs study and the example of numerous successful demonstration projects showing that the needs can easily be handled with techniques already in use, the committee intends to establish the authority for programs

which will specifically help the older blind.

"More than half of the nearly 500,000 blind persons in this country are past retirement, and are in need of a whole spectrum of special services related to their age. Because their blindness has descended upon them in their later years—usually due to degenerative diseases such as diabetes, cataracts, and glaucoma—they must undergo reorientation and adjustment training which is geared to their unique circumstances. In addition, they will need special services related to housing, transportation, recreation, and reading which younger, active blind persons already have access to through vocational rehabilitation programs.

"Legislation addressed to the elderly in general, such as that in the Older Americans Act or in title XX of the Social Security Act, has been inadequate in providing solutions to the special problems of blindness in older persons. The loss of eyesight affects an older person's ability to function more acutely than other conditions of advancing age; but even further, blindness will often impair an older person's desire to live independently and constructively. Untreated blindness in an unrehabilitated older person will almost always lead to total dependence and depressing isolation from normal social activity.

"While allowing for overall federal supervision of the rehabilitation of older blind persons programs through the Rehabilitation Services Administration, the committee has chosen to utilize the state vocational rehabilitation agencies serving the blind as primary administrative authorities, responsible for developing the eligibility criteria and priorities for service—in consultation with interested blind persons and organizations of blind persons within each state; insuring that rehabilitation services for the older blind are provided so as to complement, to the maximum extent possible, existing services for the blind, rather than duplicate them; insuring that eligibility conditions will not include economic need or length of residency; establishing prevention-of-blindness services, sight restoration and visual aids and medical services in connection

therewith, mobility training and personal adjustment services, self-help aids, counseling, guide, and reader services, and transportation services necessary to assure the availability of other services.

"Also, the committee calls for provisions to strengthen library services to the older blind within each state.

"The committee is cognizant of the specialized nature of rehabilitation services for the older blind and therefore regards it as essential that knowledgeable administrators and personnel skilled in rehabilitation and related services for the blind have direct supervisory control over these programs. To assure that this will be the case, the committee had included the requirement that the vocational rehabilitation agency serving the blind which is designated to administer the older blind program must be at least an identifiable administrative unit with a full-time director and staff which develops and administers its own budget.

"All of the provisions of this bill, and in particular those which impact on the severely handicapped, not only provide opportunities to handicapped Americans to aspire to certain goals but also provide the means by which they can reach those goals.

"Remembering the statement by President Carter at the White House Conference on Handicapped Individuals, where he expressed his strong desire to see the role of the federal government in helping handicapped individuals significantly enhanced, I feel confident the programs we have authorized in S. 2600 will assist in achieving that desire.

"Mr. President, since I first brought to the Congress, in 1936, the Randolph-Shepard Act for the Blind, I have made a deep and personal commitment to do my utmost to alleviate inequities which cause discrimination against and among handicapped individuals. If there were a legacy for posterity that I, as chairman of the Subcommittee on the Handicapped, could leave I would want it to be full service for all severely handicapped individuals in the next five years. I think it is one which all of us would deem our finest accomplishment."

The Senate report accompanying S. 2600 underlines Senator Randolph's remarks concerning the expansion of services for the older blind and also discusses in detail the need for and the approach to be taken in offering expanded reading services to the blind. The report states, in part:

"Access to printed information imposes a unique problem for the blind, and the committee feels that this is an area which requires special legislation. With the single exception of reader services for blind clients of vocational rehabilitation, assistance to the blind in overcoming the communication barriers imposed by lack of sight is minimal. The library service programs which do exist offer a general reading collection without the flexibility necessary to meet the specialized educational and employment-related reading needs of an increasingly active blind population.

"The committee sees reading assistance for the blind as an important support service which can enable blind persons to participate more effectively in education and employment opportunities. Reading demands for anyone are highly individualized; it is intended therefore that reading services be offered so as to respond to individual needs. It is also intended that reading services to be provided will not duplicate or replace those programs already operational; rather the new authority is designed to augment and supplement current effort.

"While allowing for overall federal supervision of the reading services programs through the Rehabilitation Services Administration, the committee has chosen to utilize the state vocational rehabilitation agencies serving the blind as primary administrative authorities, responsible for developing the eligibility criteria and priorities for service (in consultation with interested blind persons and organizations of blind persons within the state); ensuring that the reading services are provided so as to meet (to the maximum extent possible) the individualized reading needs of the blind of the state who are participating in elementary, secondary, post-secondary education, and employment; ensuring that eligibility conditions will not

include economic needs or length of residency; establishing (where sighted readers are employed to provide service to the blind) guidelines for compensation of such readers; and performing other administrative functions necessary for the effective delivery of reading services to the blind. The committee intends that reading services programs will be conducted in a creative and responsive fashion The committee is cognizant of the specialized nature of reading services for the blind and therefore regards it as essential that knowledgeable administrators and personnel (skilled in rehabilitation and related services for the blind) have direct supervisory control over these programs. To assure that this will be the case, the committee has included the requirement that the vocational rehabilitation agency serving the blind which is designated to administer the reading services program to the blind must be at least an identifiable administrative unit with a full-time director and staff which develops and administers its own budget."

From these statements it should be clear to all that our message is getting through, and it should also be clear that language of this type contained in Senate floor speeches and Senate committee reports can serve us well in our never-ending battle to maintain our identity in the face of the generalists. We now have a response to the public official who asserts that the blind do not have special needs; tell him to check the Senate committee report. And when a legislator asks for reasons why he should vote for a separate agency bill, we can now say that the United States Senate has affirmed the validity of this approach.

As reported in the *July Monitor*, we were not as successful in the House of Representatives; and this loss threatened to wipe out entirely the victory we achieved in the Senate. Considering the total package of amendments to the Rehabilitation Act and related laws, there were vast differences between the Senate and House bills—the special features for the blind being only one of these. In late September preparations got under way for the conference to resolve the many issues. This, on any bill, is the time when

the Administration mounts its maximum lobbying effort, comparing the two bills and drawing from a list of things it would like to have become law and those which are considered unacceptable; and there is often talk of Presidential veto if certain provisions are in the final bill. In this respect the conference on the Rehabilitation Act amendments fit the classic model. There was much talk of compromise. There were threats of a veto. And there was a list (you might almost say a "hit list") containing the items which the Administration said it would not accept. The new programs proposed for the blind were on the list.

The challenge was thus before us; and Federationists from around the country, particularly from states having Senators or Representatives as conferees, stepped up their efforts to retain the features designed to help the blind. Of course there were some other items from both bills not directly related to special programming for the blind which we endorsed as well. The conference proceeded, and compromises were made—more than we liked—but the legislation that emerged contains some important new special provisions for the blind, provisions that would not be there at all if Federationists had not been active in playing the leading role.

The big loss was the scrapping of the separate agency administrative requirement in favor of a system of "project grants." This was a blow, but it was tempered some by the victory we achieved in retaining both the reading services program and the new authority for services to older blind persons. As matters developed, we had a choice to make; and it was a difficult one. The personal expressions of need from blind people around the country had been effective; but the counter-pressure from the Administration's lobbyists had also taken its toll, so we were offered the new programs without the administrative arrangements which we regard as desirable. The alternative was to take nothing at all. We decided to take the programs and then to direct our energies at getting proper federal regulations to achieve at least some of our objectives.

The reading services amendments are contained in section 116 of the Public Law 95-602, which among other things, establishes a new section 314 of the Rehabilitation Act. There is no specifically authorized level of funding—the money is to come from a category known as “special projects.” State agencies and private nonprofit organizations of national scope, as determined by the Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration, are eligible to apply for grants to provide reading services to the blind; and the program is aimed at serving blind persons involved in education and employment who are not eligible for reader services through the regular vocational rehabilitation program. This is not a duplication or replacement of existing law. It is new authority for reading services for the blind and should result in more opportunities for education and employment for blind persons. Especially significant is the fact that these reading services can assist blind persons in employment, since many entry-level jobs have been closed due to the great amount of reading required and the small amount of money available to secure readers or otherwise to gain access to printed materials.

For purposes of this new law, reading services (to quote the exact language of Public Law 95-602) include:

“(1) the employment of persons who, by reading aloud, can afford blind persons ready access to printed information;

“(2) the transcription of printed information into Braille or sound recordings if such transcription is performed pursuant to individual requests from blind persons for such services;

“(3) the storage and distribution of Braille materials and sound recordings;

“(4) the purchase, storage, and distribution of equipment and materials necessary for the production, duplication, and reproduction of Braille materials and sound recordings;

“(5) the purchase, storage, and distribution of equipment to blind persons to provide them with individual access to printed materials by mechanical or electronic means; and

“(6) radio reading services for blind persons.”

Consider the possibilities. If your state has a grant for reading services, there will be funds available for employment reading needs. Individual requests for materials to be transcribed into Braille or sound recordings can be filled. And the modern electronic devices which are now being produced at prices much higher than most people can afford can be purchased through state agencies. These are the possibilities; but there are also challenges, since how these programs will be administered and whether or not a state will have a reading services program at all will depend on efforts of the organized blind. Also, since Public Law 95-602 was adopted in the final hours of the 95th Congress, there is no appropriation of funds at this time for these new services. This will have to be remedied during the first session of the 96th Congress, and it will require a major effort by the Federation.

The new authority for serving older blind persons through rehabilitation programs is found in title III of Public Law 95-602, which establishes a new title VII of the Rehabilitation Act called “Comprehensive Services for Independent Living.” Section 721 of this title greatly expands the federal government’s responsibilities to participate with the states in providing rehabilitation assistance to persons over age 55 who are blind. The section authorizes project grants and spells out what services are to be available. The list, to quote the language of the law, includes the following:

“(1) services to help correct blindness such as (A) outreach services, (B) visual screening, (C) surgical or therapeutic treatment to prevent, correct, or modify disabling eye conditions, and (D) hospitalization related to such services;

“(2) the provision of eyeglasses and other visual aids;

“(3) the provision of services and equipment to assist an older blind individual to become more mobile and more able to care for himself;

“(4) mobility training, Braille instruction, and other services and equipment to help

an older blind individual adjust to blindness:

"(5) guide services, reader services, and transportation; and

"(6) any other appropriate services designed to assist a blind person in coping with daily living activities, including supportive services or rehabilitation teaching services."

With regard to the independent living services title as a whole, \$80 million is authorized for fiscal year 1979, \$150 million for fiscal year 1980, and \$200 million for fiscal year 1981. Of these amounts, not less than ten percent (\$8 million, \$15 million, and \$20 million) is earmarked for projects to serve the older blind. Of course, the exact amount of funds that will actually be appropriated has not yet been determined. Consider the implications of this, however. The 1973 Rehabilitation Act did authorize some special projects for the older blind; and there were a few of them—during fiscal year 1978 approximately \$765,000 was spent. With the new law it is possible that as much as \$8 million will be directed to services for older blind persons for 1979; and by 1981 this amount may reach \$20 million. It is a major gain by any standard.

There are other features of Public Law 95-602 which will be of great interest. In fact, there are several sections which specifically identify the blind among other target groups to be served—our all-out efforts account for this.

A major purpose of the new law was to authorize the continuation of the regular vocational rehabilitation programs with which all of us are well acquainted. The law was due to expire this year unless there was congressional action; now it has four more years. For several years increases in federal funding for vocational rehabilitation have not even kept pace with inflation. The new law changes this by tying authorizations of appropriations for fiscal years 1979 through 1982 to the annual percentage of increase in the consumer price index—in other words, the increase in the cost of living. To initiate this system, \$808 million is authorized for basic vocational rehabilitation services during 1979. The amounts for fiscal years 1980, 1981, and 1982 are left to whatever increases

result from inflation, with the exception that each year has a ceiling imposed above which appropriations cannot go.

Another change which has significant implications, especially for vocational rehabilitation clients, comes under the heading of "Procedural Safeguards." The process of "fair hearings" in rehabilitation has always been nothing short of a farce. In 1974 we succeeded in breaking out of this system to the extent that blind vendors now have arbitration rights. There are problems with this, especially in getting the new system going; but it is a process which has more fairness built in than the typical system in rehabilitation—namely, taking a grievance to the person who made the decision in the first place, or if you are lucky, to his or her supervisor. The Senate bill provided for the Randolph-Sheppard arbitration process to be expanded to cover all rehabilitation clients, an approach which we had called for. But the House did not agree. The result was some change, however; so that now when a client is dissatisfied with the outcome of a "fair hearing" at the state level, he may appeal the grievance to the Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare for a review. What this will mean in practice we do not yet know, for much will be left to regulations; but we will be working to make the appeal system one which is truly fair and equitable.

Of more doubtful value is the creation in title IV of Public Law 95-602 of a National Council on the Handicapped. This is to be a 15-member council, with five members to be handicapped persons or parents or guardians of handicapped persons, and each member to be appointed by the President with the advice and consent of the Senate. Essentially this new federal council is a high-powered advisory committee, which may do some good, of course, depending on its focus and membership.

The Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board, up to now a little-known federal agency, is changed significantly as the result of this legislation. For one thing, "communication barriers" are now covered by the Board, presumably to deal with problems faced by the blind

and deaf. The Architectural, Transportation, and Communication Barriers Compliance Board (ATCBCB), as it will now be known, was originally composed of the heads of certain federal agencies. But now it will have eleven members representing the public, named by the President, five of whom must be handicapped. The Board's expanded authority allows it to bring suit and to intervene in suits in the federal courts to force compliance with various architectural barriers laws and to provide technical assistance for the removal of barriers.

There are several new nondiscrimination features that will have far-reaching impact. In the first place, section 504 has now been amended to include federal programs and activities as well as federally assisted ones. This will mean that the practices of federal agencies will have to be free of discrimination on the basis of handicap. In addition, sections 501 (pertaining to affirmative action for the handicapped in federal employment) and 504 are given new strength since the new law makes the rights and remedies available to minorities under the Civil Rights Act of 1964 applicable to the Rehabilitation Act as well. This may mean the recovery of back pay and other damages. Attorneys' fees may also be awarded.

A program to stimulate employment opportunities for the handicapped is established and becomes title VI of the Rehabilitation Act. Part A is patterned after the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) and authorizes \$260 million over the next four fiscal years for community service employment of handicapped persons. The original House bill permitted this program to pay subminimum wages, but the final law prohibits this. Because of our efforts, the following sentence was inserted: "The Department of Labor shall not issue any certificate of exemption under section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 with respect to any person employed in a project under this section." Our campaign for minimum wage for the blind is clearly having its effect.

The new title VI also expands a program called "Projects With Industry," which has functioned on a more limited basis as a demonstration project under the 1973 Rehabilitation Act. A completely new feature in this program is the authority for making direct grants to businesses which are owned and operated by handicapped persons. No specific funding is authorized.

There is new authority in the Act for the establishment of centers for rehabilitation and for providing a broad range of personal adjustment services. Research on problems related to disabilities will be expanded in a major way, with substantially increased funding and the creation of a new National Institute of Handicapped Research. The research effort administered by the Rehabilitation Services Administration has produced a few good things for the blind. But overwhelmingly the harmful effects have far outweighed the positive ones. The early grants to the National Accreditation Council (NAC), for instance, were paid from these "research" funds. It will thus be important to monitor closely the establishment of the new National Institute and to participate in setting its priorities.

There are many new opportunities available to us as a result of Public Law 95-602. The challenge will be to have these implemented in ways that will be helpful. The first challenge will be to get the most desirable new programs funded. Then we must work for positive regulations to govern the operation of the programs. We have been very successful so far, but our strength must continue to be felt in the future.

Contrast our gains with the loss suffered by the AFB-NAC-ACB combine. The American Foundation for the Blind proposed that all "rehabilitation facilities" (sheltered workshops) be required to be accredited by 1980. The American Council of the Blind backed this in congressional hearings. It was an obvious ploy to give NAC a stranglehold over more programs serving the blind. But it did not work. Public Law 95-602 contains no accreditation requirement; it has no NAC. □

TWO FEDERATIONISTS ELECTED TO PUBLIC OFFICE

Two well-known Federationists were elected to public office this fall—Judge Lou Corbin of Florida and Euclid Rains, president of the NFB of Alabama. Besides being a tribute to the personal qualities of the two men, these victories indicate that the general public is beginning to accept that

blindness is only a characteristic and one that need not bar a person from public office. These victories mark real progress for the organized blind movement. Following are two newspaper articles about the newly elected Federationists—Judge Corbin and Representative Rains:

NEW LAWMAKER FAMILIAR FACE IN MONTGOMERY

by LENORE REESE

[Reprinted, with permission, from the September 25, 1978, *Alabama Journal*, the evening newspaper of Montgomery.]

The first time Euclid Rains came to Montgomery was in 1942 to see the star where Jeff Davis took the oath of office as president of the Confederacy. Not knowing anyone to stay with in the city, he told a night watchman at the capitol that he planned to spend the night right there, talking to him. The watchman protested but finally relented, and young Rains spent the night curled on a downstairs couch.

Next January, Rains will return to the capitol, but not to see Davis' famous star. He'll be occupying a seat in the Alabama House of Representatives from the 25th District, which comprises part of DeKalb and Marshall counties in northeast Alabama.

In fact, last week on a visit to Montgomery, he walked right up to his future desk in the house chamber. Not a particularly outstanding accomplishment for a newcomer to the legislature to locate his desk right off the bat. But for Rains, it was an unusual coincidence. He is blind.

"I walked right up to the desk and said how about this one for the picture? And you know what? It was the one for DeKalb and Marshall counties. How about that?"

When the tanned, smiling farmer from Geraldine, a tiny DeKalb County town, is sworn in later this year, he will become the second blind man in history to serve in the state legislature. The first, John S. Laverty,

represented Talladega County from 1915 to 1919.

Rains' face is not unfamiliar in the city. As president of the National Federation of the Blind in Alabama, Rains has made frequent trips to Montgomery. In 1975, he staged a bread and water fast on the capitol steps to protest the treatment of students at the Alabama Institute for the Deaf and Blind at Talladega. Just last week he was in town to chastise state education officials for not moving fast enough to implement a statewide study of blind services.

Naturally, he says, he can be expected to introduce legislation to benefit the blind, but he steadfastly maintains his first obligation is the people of his district.

"My love of the people of this region has been basic in my life," he said. "I was offered jobs at two colleges for the blind in the West, but I refused to leave the people I'd lived with all my life."

Rains, 57, was born in rural Marshall County to farmer parents who suffered through the Depression by selling their farm and trading their car for a \$7.50 Bible. An accident with a pair of scissors at age 4 left him blind in one eye and in three years he was totally blind.

Rains enrolled at the Talladega Institute where he learned Braille faster than any other student, graduated from Snead Junior

College and was the first blind student to graduate (in 1944 with a bachelor's degree in history) from Jacksonville State University.

It was while he owned his own broom-and mop-making business in the 1950's that Rains began noticing the decline of the rural areas of his home county. He says he knew something had to be done to reverse the trend.

"I realized children were growing up in a place where there wasn't much future. There was a school closed every year for a while and industry moving out. I felt if we let it go on, pretty soon we wouldn't have anything left," he said.

Rains says it was divine providence that gave him a chance to run for the legislature. When state senator Sid McDonald of Arab vacated his seat to run for governor, representative Hinton Mitchem of Albertville decided to run for McDonald's seat. Rains saw his opportunity and, from the outset, believed he could capture Mitchem's seat without a runoff. In the September 5 primary, he proved right, winning 3,914 votes to his nearest opponent's 1,353.

"It makes me feel good that the people recognized me for my abilities rather than rejected me for my disability," he said.

During the campaign, Rains said he and his wife, Nell, and their children—Tommy, 18,

Billy, 16, and Mary Ruth, 14—worked door to door often until late in the evening.

"As long as we could see lights on," he said. "I like to worked 'em all to death. I estimate we knocked on 10,000 doors. I bought a new pair of shoes at the beginning of the campaign, and now I can read Braille through the soles.

Campaigning was a learning experience for Rains. The people he met ranged from the hospital patients who wanted to shake his hand because they thought he was a "movie star" (an April 1977 "To Tell the Truth" show featured Rains as the nation's only blind Little League baseball coach), to those who warned him he'd be "contaminated" if he was elected. But Rains says it will not happen.

"I'm going to represent the people, not an independent dictatorial entity down there to grind axes. I believe government should keep closer to the people, so close they can talk to it and tell it what they want."

"When I need to do a job, I simply find a way that I can do it," he writes in his book *I'm Not Afraid of the Dark*. "I have always made it a practice to help more people than help me. I believe if we do not leave the world better than we found it, there is absolutely no reason or excuse for us having been here." ■

BLINDNESS DOESN'T HAMPER THIS JUDGE

by REGIS SHEEHAN

[Reprinted, with permission, from the September 27, 1978, *Clay Today* of Orange Park, Florida.]

A world of darkness has not stifled the goals and accomplishments of Louis Corbin. Recently elected a judge in the fourth judicial district, an area which includes Clay, Nassau, and Duval counties, Corbin faces his judgeship through the eyes which will not permit him to see those persons whose fate he may determine.

Corbin, who was a Duval County judge since 1973, has been blind since age seven, when a tragic shotgun accident took his

sight. Several months after the mishap, young Corbin began the retraining process that would enable him to overcome a serious handicap and go on to become a successful professional.

Beginning in the fall of 1946 and continuing for 11 years, Corbin was a student at the School for the Blind in Saint Augustine. As a senior he returned home to Marianna, Florida, to graduate from the public high school. To the best of his knowledge, he was

the first blind person to graduate from a public school up to that time.

Following graduation he found himself in no position to finance a college education. Given his current role, he opted for an unlikely career: he became a piano player in the local bars and nightclubs. In 1958, while playing in a club in Pensacola, he happened to meet a fellow from [what is now the Office of Services for the Blind]. In the course of the conversation Corbin learned of scholarships for which he might qualify, based upon his record of high school achievement.

"By that time I had deduced that I was not going to be a star musician," the judge reflected, "and I started seeing too many 50-year-old musicians with nothing to show for their lives' work but an enlarged liver."

With the aid of a state scholarship, he was able to attend the University of Florida. He received a bachelor's degree in three years time and continued on to law school, again on a scholarship. His law degree was awarded in April 1964.

During law school Corbin frequently commuted to Jacksonville to play the piano at the Park & King Bar, a quiet neighborhood place at the time. As a result of his associations and familiarity with the city, he chose Jacksonville to establish his legal practice.

"I set up private practice because I couldn't get a job," he said. "I tried for 14 months, sending out a good 100 applications to state and federal agencies. The response was we can't use you." Corbin has no doubt that the refusal of job offers was primarily due to the fact of his blindness.

In 1972 he had his first taste of politics, entering, and winning, the election to the county court. He was reelected to the office, standing unopposed, in 1976. Expressing the feeling that he had grown as far as he can in his current position, he resigned (effective January 1st) to run for the circuit court. "Circuit court is more challenging," he said. "You have more legally complex issues and a wider variety."

Corbin has, in fact, already served as a

circuit court judge on a temporary basis. On several occasions in the past he had been appointed to serve during shortages here and elsewhere in the state. He liked what he found in the job.

Insofar as his campaign was concerned, Judge Corbin regarded his blindness as an asset, rather than a liability. Indeed, his campaign slogan depicted him as a man with "insight, not eyesight."

But how does a lawyer, and a judge on top of that, handle the volume of paperwork which comes his way without being able to see? The answer is simple: "I have it read to me." Corbin's secretary and others read the mail, cases, and advance sheets and appraise him of the facts in question. "Any high school student could learn how to research the law," he said. "The trick is, when you find it, determining what it means, analyzing it. And you don't need to see to think."

The judge has a reputation for having an excellent memory and the ability to dredge up arcane facts without a great deal of difficulty. Nevertheless, in his chambers, he makes use of a Braille writer to record certain data. . . .

Nor does his lack of sight appear to hamper his courtroom ability. "In fact, I've had lawyers tell me that they like to argue motions in my court," he said with a wry smile, "because they know I'm listening."

His reputation goes beyond mere listening ability. Assistant state attorney Hank Coxé said that Corbin's court was one of the 12 county courts where the most experienced prosecutors are usually assigned. This is because "he challenges everyone (on points of law). He really holds your feet to the fire." Coxé added that, in his opinion, "Corbin is one of the most talented judges in the area court system."

"Blindness is a bother because you have to plan ahead sometimes," [Corbin] observed. "But a blind person, given education and intelligence—and some of the breaks that everyone needs in life—can accomplish, today, anything he wants to. I'm here to prove it." □

VICTORY IN THE ELLEN SCHUMAN CASE: FURTHER PROGRESS FOR BLIND TEACHERS

In a decision handed down in September, the Connecticut Supreme Court ruled in favor of a blind teacher, Ellen Schuman, who had been excluded from a teaching job at the Oak Hill School for the Blind on the basis of her blindness.

This case was first reported in an article by Jonathan May in the June 1976 *Monitor*, as follows:

"Miss Ellen Steinberg, now Mrs. Schuman, worked as a teacher's aide in the upper school of Oak Hill from February to June 1974 when this position was terminated. She applied for either of two teacher's aide positions in the deaf-blind unit of the lower school, but was not accepted because the school claimed that teaching deaf-blind retarded youngsters required 20/20, or normal, vision. After negotiating with the school for over a year on Mrs. Schuman's behalf, the Connecticut Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities presented its case to a hearing examiner in five hearings over the past three months. NFB of Connecticut representatives have attended all these hearings in support of Mrs. Schuman."

"Miss Josephine Pace, principal of the lower school, testified that having a visually handicapped aide working with severely retarded deaf-blind children would be 'foolish.' Miss Pace is a graduate of the Oak Hill School. Dr. Marcia Knight, psychologist, and Mr. Joseph Kascus, personnel director of the school, reiterated that perfect sight was necessary because of safety and the need to respond to the behavior of these special children.

"The NFB National Office assisted in the case by presenting as a witness a blind teacher, Mrs. Connie Miller, from Glenwood, Iowa. She is a certified blind teacher and foster parent of deaf-blind and severely retarded children who demonstrated through her career of 20 years that sight was not a bona fide occupational qualification for instruction of deaf-blind children."

"What is most sad in this case is that Oak Hill School, the very institution created to set an example of encouragement for growing blind youngsters, has failed so miserably in its mission. It is sad that an institution created to teach the skills of confidence needed for an independent future should have such a lack of belief in the intelligence and normality of the adult blind. Lack of full vision does not mean lack of ability or responsibility. Let the school practice what it is supposed to teach."

The Schuman case is classic; the school's refusal to hire her was based on the same reasoning that has been found in every teacher-discrimination case we have fought: The school believed that you cannot deal with children you cannot see. It made no difference that Ellen Schuman had already worked as a teacher's aide with blind children at another level of the school.

In his speech "Blindness—Milestones and Millstones," President Jernigan told a story that sheds light on the rationale behind such blanket rules. Asked by an agency professional how he would deal with a sighted mother with a new blind baby, Dr. Jernigan suggested that he would send a blind mother to talk to the parent, a blind mother who could present a successful case of adjustment to blindness. Dr. Jernigan then said:

"To all this my agency friend shook his head in disagreement and disbelief. It wouldn't do, he said, to assign a blind person to the case . . . because she would not be able to perceive the visual cues revealing whether the woman was embracing the blind child or giving it affection. In fact, he lectured me at some length concerning the tendency of parents to resent and reject their blind infants, and not pet or caress them. Therefore, he argued, a sighted professional was called for who could observe visually the facial expressions of resentment and rejection, and provide appropriate therapy for the mother."

"My reply to this line of reasoning," Dr. Jernigan continued, "was that the surest way to create and reinforce such negative attitudes on the part of the parent would be to dispatch his type of professional worker, bent on discovering hostility and dispensing therapy at all costs. Where there is no hostility to begin with, such a worker is likely to create it—and where hostility already exists, she is likely to reinforce it. On the other hand, the well-adjusted blind mother or college girl is a living demonstration of how to get along with blindness regarding it as a mere inconvenience, not as a tragedy. Such a blind person has many ways of observing the attitudes and behavior of the new mother; but more important, after a few hours with her, the mother is likely to see blindness in a new light and her normal maternal instincts will do the rest. In other words, the problem raised by my professional friend was not with the mother but with his own misconceptions about blindness."

One can imagine the reaction of Dr. Jernigan's professional friend to the idea of employing a blind person to teach children who are not only blind but multiply handicapped! It is worth noting that as we make progress in discrediting some of the worst of the traditions in work with the blind, these traditions are being dusted off and applied to the multiply handicapped. It is not hard to figure out why: The blind are organized and strong enough to resist the worst forms of custodialism; the multiply handicapped are not. It is a means of avoiding feedback from consumers and keeping the old professional bastion intact—a bastion built of college degrees, high salaries, and plenty of public recognition and gratitude.

In any event, here was Ellen Schuman, a blind woman who wanted to teach deaf-blind retarded children at the Oak Hill School. The school had a flat rule—all teachers of multiply handicapped children must have 20/20 vision. The rule left no room to determine whether Mrs. Schuman could do the job, and in fact, whether her blindness wasn't a positive characteristic in terms of

the job. This situation is why the NFB has pushed so hard for civil rights legislation—in the states and federally. In 1973, the NFB of Connecticut was instrumental in persuading the state legislature to pass a fair employment law that reads in part:

"It shall be an unfair employment practice (a) For an employer, by himself or his agent, except in the case of a bona fide occupational qualification or need, because of the race, color, religious creed, age, sex, marital status, national origin, ancestry or physical disability, including, but not limited to, blindness of any individual, to refuse to hire or employ or to bar or to discharge from employment such individual or to discriminate against him in compensation or in terms, conditions or privileges of employment"

Ellen Schuman took her case to the state Human Rights Commission, which ruled in her favor. According to a description of this hearing found in the supreme court opinion: "There was testimony that the [school's] policy was to place all visually disabled applicants in a class and to deny them employment without examination of individual capabilities. The commission also received testimony from other visually handicapped teachers that they have successfully taught multiply handicapped children of all ages. On the basis of this and other evidence, the commission concluded that the [school] had engaged in an unfair employment practice."

The Connecticut Institute for the Blind, which operates the Oak Hill School, did not accept the decision of the Human Rights Commission and appealed the matter to the Hartford County Court of Common Pleas. This court overturned the decision of the Human Rights Commission and said that the school had been right in denying Ellen Schuman a job.

The basis for this reversal was a phrase in the state fair employment law: Employers may not discriminate on the basis of blindness "except in the case of a bona fide occupational qualification or need." This phrase, which occurs in most anti-discrimination laws, means that an employer need not hire

a blind person as a bus driver. It refers to situations where sight (or some other physical characteristic) can be *proven* necessary to do the job. It does not mean, as many, many people have interpreted it, that simply because you *believe* that sight is necessary you can then eliminate blind applicants. If this latter interpretation were what is meant by the law, there would be no point in having the law. Still, this is the interpretation the court of common pleas used. Quoting again from the history of the case found in the supreme court opinion:

"Specifically, the court [of common pleas] ruled that good vision is directly related to, and therefore a valid job qualification for, successful performance in the position of teacher's aide in the [school's] lower school classes for multiply disadvantaged children. It therefore concluded that the [school] had carried its burden of showing that the complainant's disability prevented her from adequately performing this particular job and was, therefore, within the exception to [the fair employment law]."

With this lower court's decision, not only Ellen Schuman but all blind teachers were in trouble—the court had found that sight is a necessary requirement for a teacher, at least a teacher of the multiply handicapped. Fortunately, the matter did not rest there. The Human Rights Commission appealed the matter to the Connecticut Supreme Court. The outcome of the appeal was important enough that the Federation decided to bear the expense of a lawyer to oversee the appeal. It was well worthwhile: The decision handed down in September stated that the court of common pleas was in error. The original decision of the Human Rights Commission was declared correct, and the case has been sent back to the lower court to determine what back pay and other benefits Mrs. Schuman is entitled to. The supreme court decision was heavily influenced by the brief filed by the NFB, adopting its reasoning and even some of its language.

The supreme court clearly explained the limitation on exceptions to the fair employment act. The decision stated: "The [school's] requirement that its lower school

teachers' aides have normal vision serves as a direct disqualification of anyone with a visual handicap, in the same way that an advertisement of jobs for men only serves automatically to disqualify women. The [school] cannot meet the test of a bona fide occupational qualification by creating an irrebuttable presumption that visually handicapped employees, as a class, are unable adequately to perform duties as teachers' aides."

The supreme court then quoted from an earlier decision in which it stated: "The very act of classifying individuals by means of criteria irrelevant to the ultimate end sought to be accomplished operates in a discriminatory manner. Such discrimination is destructive to society as a whole in that it eliminates a class of individuals who otherwise could have made vital and fresh contributions."

After a discussion of technical points, the supreme court concluded: "It is, however, eminently clear that the [school's] blanket exclusion of anyone without normal visual acuity, without any effort to define the specifications of the position of teacher's aide or to test the capacities of the complainant for that position, cannot stand. Blanket exclusions, no matter how well motivated, fly in the face of the command to individuate that is central to fair employment practices."

The supreme court ruled, then, that blanket exclusions on the basis of handicap are illegal. To institute such a rule, the employer must prove that *no* member of the group can perform the job. Although the principle seems self-evident, it has rarely been stated so strongly by a court before. In reaching the decision, the supreme court depended partly on the Gurmankin case, in which the NFB participated several years ago. This is important because it adds strength to that federal court opinion. Finally, although this case was heard in a state court, the decision will have influence on similar cases in other states.

One final point should be made. Almost more important than what we won in this case is what we would have lost had we not

taken part in the appeal of the negative lower court decision. This was one of those cases we had to fight simply to protect what we had won earlier. And yet the legal expenses of fighting such suits are enormous. We are reaching the point where we simply will not be able to take on such cases because we cannot pay for them. We may already have reached that point.

The same thing is true of our work with the Congress. No group has been more effective than the NFB in fashioning federal law so that it meets true needs. Yet every new Administration and every new Congress at some point attempts to undercut our

gains—whether it be in the name of reorganization or cost-cutting or something else. If we were not constantly vigilant, we would soon be back where we were in 1940. But unless the contributions from Federationists, their families, and friends increase dramatically, the NFB Washington Office may have to close in the months to come.

In the meantime, though, the Federation will continue to do everything it can to protect the rights of blind persons such as Ellen Schuman and to voice the needs of the blind to the government and the public. If we have the money, that is where it will go. That is our prime purpose as a movement. □

LET A HUGGABLE INTO YOUR LIFE!

Let a huggable into your life! Who knows? You may become more huggable.

Huggables are a fundraising project for the NFB. They are large, cute, well-made stuffed animals—chipmunks, golden bears, donkeys, bulls, tigers, foxes, turtles, frogs, dinosaurs, koala bears, elephants, hippos, spitzes, bears, owls, Santa Clauses, dogs with coveralls, pink cats, raccoons, Saint Bernards, and shaggy dogs.

We have found that huggables are very easy to sell. Approach the president of your bank or savings and loan association with several huggables. Suggest that the bank might want to give away huggables to its customers and at the same time get some good publicity for the bank's service to a nonprofit organization. This has been done with good success by Maryland Federationists.

Approach the owner of a local gas station or business with huggables. Suggest the idea that every business needs a cuddly mascot. Then ask the business to sell huggables or give them to its favorite customers if the huggable becomes an object of attention or desire.

Approach the parents of kids in Sunday School at your church. Mothers with small children know other families who might want cute, inexpensive stuffed huggables.

If you live in an area with a popular sports team, it is easy to sell the team's animal mascot. We have been selling turtles to Turps fans like hotcakes off a griddle. Another idea is to persuade hospital giftshops (particularly in a children's hospital) to stock these huggables.

Each huggable costs you \$2, and they are sold for \$4—or a profit of \$2 per huggable. Think of how much money you can raise for the NFB by taking your lunch hour to persuade a banker to buy 500 huggables.

The minimum order is two dozen huggables, and you must order at least one dozen of any one type of huggable—frogs, hippos, or what have you. Each dozen huggables costs \$24. A part of this price will go to the national treasury. It will take at least two weeks for your huggables to arrive after your order is received. Order from: National Federation of the Blind (A Missouri Corporation), 5920 Nall Avenue, Suite 202, Mission, Kansas 66202.

Your check or money order must accompany your order. There will be additional costs for postage; the huggables will be sent to you postage due.

The creative Federationists in Missouri keep coming up with good fundraising ideas. Let's all do the same. □

THE BLIND BITE THE HAND THAT LEADS THEM

by DEREK VanPELT

[Reprinted, with permission, from the May 1978 issue of *Cleveland Magazine*. The article bore the subheading "Behind a \$1 million, five-year lawsuit against the Cleveland Society for the Blind, one of the city's oldest, richest, and most prestigious charities, a fierce political struggle has been going on between militant blind people and the social welfare establishment."]

A pretty young secretary steps up to the counter of the snack bar in the Cleveland Electric Illuminating Company's Public Square annex, asks for a bag of potato chips, and produces a dollar bill from her purse. Behind the counter, under the sign that reads "Operated by the Cleveland Society for the Blind," a handsome gray-haired man recognizes the voice and greets his customer by name. You could swear you see his eyes twinkle as he hands her the chips, takes the money, and asks her, "Is that a \$100 bill?"

John Knall, dressed in the white shirt and black bow tie familiar to patrons of snack bars operated by the blind in office buildings throughout Greater Cleveland, can joke about his limitation (he doesn't call it a "handicap") because he has never let it hold him back for long. Born with only 70 percent of normal vision, Knall was an active jazz musician and arranger in Cleveland's dance halls in the 1930's, and he started his own club in 1937. But when his eyes failed to the point where he was unable to read a score and follow a conductor at the same time, Knall registered with the Cleveland Society for the Blind. During World War II he made brooms in its sheltered workshop, and in 1947 he got a chance to go into business again through the Society's vending stand program. Two years later, he was installed in his present downtown location, which has provided him with a living ever since.

All seems well with John Knall as he kids with his customers at the Illuminated Building. He seems contented, looking much younger than his 67 years. But as he takes your arm and you lead him to a seat in the lunchroom, another side of the man begins

to emerge. He talks about why he's still not satisfied, why he helped recruit other blind snack bar managers five years ago to support a \$1 million suit in U.S. District Court here against the Society for the Blind. "We're fighting the establishment," says Knall with an impish smile. "The agency had complete control of our lives. They were doing what *they* thought we needed. We thought we should have some say-so. Their whole attitude was one of looking down at us, and we finally got fed up. We're tired of being told what we should do by people who don't know what they're doing."

These are strong words from a man whom most of us would consider seriously handicapped, one who to all appearances owes whatever prosperity he has achieved to the Cleveland Society for the Blind—which contracted for his snack bar, paid for its installation and initial stock, and continues to provide various management services for Knall and the other blind people who work in its 36 locations in Northeastern Ohio. But hell hath no fury like that of a blind person who feels patronized, and John Knall is a born fighter. "We're not after the money, really," he says. "I don't think any of us really expect to get any money out of this. We're after the principle, which is that they simply can't do these things to people any more. We won't take it."

Knall is one of some 35 plaintiffs in the suit—filed in U.S. District Court in 1972, dismissed by Judge Robert B. Krupansky in 1975 on jurisdictional grounds, and now awaiting a ruling from a three-judge panel of the U.S. Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals in Cincinnati, where arguments were heard this spring. The snack bar operators allege

that the Society for the Blind illegally overcharged them for its services over a period of nearly 20 years; employed questionable bookkeeping practices amounting to fraud in its Food Service Division; and violated the managers' civil rights by imposing a detailed dress and health code upon them. "The Society denies all the allegations," according to its attorney, William H. Wallace of Thompson, Hine and Flory, who declined to comment further on the grounds that the litigation was still pending. The plaintiffs are represented by local attorney Steven A. Sindell, a national counsel for the National Federation of the Blind—a militant advocacy organization of blind "consumers" which is providing financial support for the suit. John Knall is the local president of the Iowa-based Federation. Although most of the plaintiffs are not local Federation activists, most are members of a statewide snack bar operators' group associated with the Federation.

For the past ten years, the Federation—which considers blindness not a handicap, but an "inconvenience" which can be overcome—has been challenging the legitimacy of established charities and social welfare agencies, which it views as "custodializing" the blind, channeling them into a few predetermined avenues of activity and preventing them from achieving their full potential. Cleo B. Dolan, the executive director of the Cleveland Society for the Blind for the past 20 years, holds the Federation responsible for disrupting the vending stand operation, one of his showcase programs. "This is left over from the 1960's welfare-rights type of thing," says Dolan. "These groups are out to create problems; they have no intention of winning the case. This is all coming from two or three militant operators who are trying to put us out of business. It's part of a national effort to discredit every legitimate agency." Dolan, whose removal the snack bar managers have insisted upon as a condition of settling the lawsuit, also complains that the press is biased toward the Federation and hints that some local media have "gotten burned" when they attempted to cover the case. (Interviews with newsmen who have covered the story produced no

evidence to substantiate Dolan's allegation.)

Indeed, ever since Cleveland became a major arena in the Federation's battle against the "establishment," the two sides have been engaged in a bitter propaganda war. Dolan, for example, went so far as to attempt to dissuade a Nevada foundation from awarding the Federation a grant to develop a new reading machine. The Federation went so far as to hire helicopters and private detectives to follow supervisors from the Cleveland Society's Food Service Division on their working hours, in hopes of discovering some dereliction of duty.

Sorting out the truth from the rhetoric, distortions and self-serving publicity generated by both parties to the conflict is no simple matter, but this much is certain: the Cleveland Society for the Blind, one of the pet causes of the local business and social elite, has lost some of its sacred-cow status. The new militancy of the blind has been a big headache for Cleo Dolan. "If everything we've done is wrong, then there must be something wrong with society," he says. "And then where are we going?" The snack bar operators would like to force the Society out of the food service business—an area in which it has been a pioneer—and if they succeed, an attack on the charity's sheltered workshops may be next. "I'm not knocking the Society," insists Irv Fillinger, a plaintiff in the lawsuit, who runs a vending machine operation in the new Federal Building. "They've done a lot of good for a lot of people. But the sooner the court tells them to close their food service division, the better for everybody."

The Society's trustees, somewhat taken aback by the criticism, agree with Dolan's view of the lawsuit. "The major issue is monetary. Some of the stand operators started getting a little greedy," says Stouffer's president Alan McDonald, the chairman of the trustees' advisory committee for the Food Service Division. "The accusations are ridiculous and poorly founded, and the suit has been a tremendous waste of money and time." Adds Douglas Wick, owner of Wick Pontiac and president of the Society's board, "I really believe in the organization. What-

ever you do, there's always a few disgruntled people. But you can't allow yourself to be sidetracked by them."

Despite Dolan's claims that there never would have been any trouble if the Federation of the Blind had stayed out of his business, many of the snack bar operators' more basic complaints about the charity are echoed by other professionals in the field. "Cleveland has the basic mechanics for a good agency," says Bob Waterstradt, a former program development specialist for the Society's radio reading program who is now working with a blind consumers' group in Philadelphia. "But they're so steeped in 'helping the poor blind' that it's very difficult to change anything there. Everything flows from the basic idea that 'You're blind and we're helping you.' They treat blind people like children," continues Waterstradt, who is blind himself. "They have a vested interest in keeping the blind off the streets and out of power."

"Things are changing slowly at the Society because blind people are fighting," says a social worker who asked to remain anonymous. "These agencies only exist because there are blind people. They spring up as a go-between, make decisions for blind people, and take credit for their progress. They should be giving them the skills they need to go out and get what they need for themselves. This is beginning to happen now, but it's not the big push that it should be. They're still referring blind people into the same old grooves. With the technology that's available now, there's almost nothing blind people can't be trained to do, except possibly driving cars and flying airplanes. But if blind people took care of themselves, Cleo Dolan wouldn't have a job."

Federation literature, in fact, gives case histories of blind people who have become switchboard operators, store managers, and even electrical engineers, and the nation's first blind medical school graduate is presently a resident in psychiatry. The work of Dr. Norman Yoder, who runs the Cleveland Society's rehabilitation program, is widely praised, but despite his efforts, the snack bar program—begun here in 1922—remains

the only professional field where the Society has placed large numbers of the blind. "We've tried all kinds of things," claims Dolan, "but for some reason, none of them ever quite clicked." Dolan speculates that the snack bars, still the nation's largest employer of the blind, took off because of the federal government's support. The idea started in Cleveland, where the Society built the country's biggest operation and is now the only remaining private charity with a substantial vending stand program. But Dolan seems unable to explain why, in more than 50 years, no other substantive professional programs for the blind have been developed.

At any rate, the Society has made a name for itself with its snack bars, and Dolan's consternation over the program's setbacks during the 1970's is understandable. It was almost wiped out once before—in the years following 1928, when the Society, at the urging of the federal government, turned its stands over to the managers to be run as individual entrepreneurs. The onset of the Depression, combined with the managers' lack of preparation for independent operation, soon put all but one location out of business. The federal government responded with the Randolph-Sheppard Act of 1934, providing federal tax dollars through the states to launch new vending stands. This put the Ohio Bureau of Services to the Blind in the snack bar business as well, and the Cleveland Society agreed to administer state-funded stands in this area, in addition to expanding its own program. By the time the suit was filed in 1972, the two operations together were grossing \$11 million a year statewide, placing the combined programs in the top 400 food service businesses in the country. New locations continued to spring up in the Cleveland area, and the managers' income had grown considerably, with several operators earning between \$12,000 and \$17,000 a year.

Despite this prosperity and growth, however, all was not well with the Society's Food Service Division. Since 1956, with the consent of the state, the Society had partially financed the expansion of its program

and provided additional services to the managers by increasing its service charge to 7% of the stands' gross proceeds—4% more than specified in the state's original agreement with the federal government. When the Society began talking about upping the charge to 8% or 9%, several managers began to question the need for the increase and the uses to which the money was being put. As early as 1961, Irv Fillinger found that "in nine out of ten cases" his figures were not agreeing with the Society's. "When I tried to talk to them about it, I was told I had a negative attitude," he says.

Over the years, Fillinger and his colleagues, although they had been set up in business by the Society and/or state and continued to accept various services from the agencies, had come to consider themselves self-sufficient business people—which, in fact, is what the Randolph-Sheppard Act was supposed to make them. They began to tangle with the Society's Food Service Division managers over a multitude of issues, primarily centering around how much freedom the operators should have in making business decisions. Many operators resented the style of Dolan—characterized by John Knall as "a dictatorial, custodially-oriented, old-line social worker"—and his Food Service Division director, Harry Cotton, a hard-hustling sales type who the managers felt did more talking than listening.

Some operators began to protest the program's lengthy and painfully detailed dress code, which, among other things, required them to wear black bow ties, "use a good deodorant," and "change underwear daily." Jim Goodwin, then a supervisor with the Food Service Division and now its director, insists that the managers themselves were involved in writing the code through their advisory committee. "They felt at the time that the program would benefit from an image like that of a franchise or chain operation like McDonald's," says Goodwin. "We based it on the health codes of the local and state restaurant associations." He claims the rules, intended as "guidelines," were never enforced and adds that they are now being rewritten and simplified.

Things came to a head in the fall of 1972, when Dolan began to apply what the managers considered excessive pressure to contribute a percentage of their annual earnings to the United Torch drive. This and other differences were being heatedly discussed at a meeting of the managers and Food Service Division personnel when John Knall walked in late and dropped the bomb, announcing that someone had gotten in touch with the National Federation of the Blind's headquarters and that the Federation was interested in backing a lawsuit against the Society. "I was stunned," says Harry Cotton, since moved to another job in the Division. "I had no idea it was coming."

A few days later, nine managers met at the home of attorney Steven Sindell and began to map out the legal action. Nine more soon joined the action, filed in U.S. District Court on December 15, 1972. Two months later, three of the plaintiffs received a letter from Cotton warning them that anyone who refused to sign a contract within seven days would be relieved of their stands and consigned to "relief roles." Cotton claims that the state had ordered him to take the action as a formality and that "relief roles" meant duty as substitute operators, not placing the managers on welfare. That was not how the managers understood it, however, and they went to court and obtained a restraining order against what they saw as direct retaliation for the lawsuit. The battle lines were now drawn. When the Snack Bar Personnel Association, a sort of local managers' union, joined the suit as a plaintiff, operators were told they could not belong to the Association unless they joined the suit. A total of 39 operators eventually added their names as plaintiffs.

The following summer, Federation President Kenneth Jernigan, perhaps the most dynamic and controversial leader in the movement of blind people for "self-determination," addressed the national convention of the American Association of Workers for the Blind in downtown Cleveland. Jernigan delivered a scathing attack on the Cleveland Society for the Blind and Cleo Dolan, who sat silently on the stage "looking like a

thundercloud," as one spectator recalls. For its part, the Society, operating on the assumption that the managers misunderstood the issues and had been pressured into joining the suit, launched an "educational campaign" to explain the workings of the Food Service Division to the operators. State officials were brought in to talk to managers about the state program, which most of the operators felt would be preferable to working with the Society. The state's Rehabilitation Services Commission conducted an audit of the Society's books—already audited by accounting firms for both parties to the suit, with widely varying results—and concluded that the Society had conducted its business fairly. Harry Cotton was replaced as director of the Society's Food Service Division by an earnest young supervisor named Jim Goodwin, who set about mending the agency's strained relationships with the snack bar managers. "I think we have a good program with good people in it," says Goodwin today, "and I think we've cleared up a lot of the misunderstandings that existed. But a few people seem to insist on holding on to the past, rather than working together for the future."

Finally, nearly three years after the filing of the lawsuit, U.S. District Judge Robert B. Krupansky dismissed it on the grounds that the Randolph-Sheppard Act did not provide a specific judicial remedy for the operators and that they had failed to pursue the appropriate administrative remedy through the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. The managers immediately filed an appeal, now pending in the U.S. Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals. "If the remedy is through HEW, then there's no remedy at all," says attorney Sindell, recalling a meeting with representatives of the U.S. Rehabilitation Services Administration's Office for the Blind (which is charged with the administration of the Randolph-Sheppard regulations) and the Washington representative of the Federation of the Blind. "I was appalled by their total indifference," Sindell continues. "They seem to have the same paternalistic attitude toward the blind that the Cleveland Society has shown over the years.

In reality, there's no federal enforcement of the statute."

Spokesmen for the federal agency, in fact, could find no record of the meeting, although they confirm that it did occur, and referred us back to the state of Ohio—which is virtually in total control of the program here. The U.S. Rehabilitation Services Commissioner, however, is the official who, under Randolph-Sheppard provisions, would have had to make the final ruling on the Society's increase in its service charge to stands operated under the federal program. Society director Dolan says the increases were approved by HEW's regional office in Chicago, but that office indicates that it merely examines such applications for technical errors and passes them on to Washington for final approval. No one above the state level will own up to putting their initials on the papers; the entire affair seems to have vanished down a bureaucratic rabbit hole.

Meanwhile, although the snack bar managers had lost their first battle in court, they won a victory when the state terminated its agreement with the Society to operate its Cleveland area stands in the fall of 1975—moving some 15 Cleveland locations from Society to state control and depriving the Society's Food Service Division of nearly 50% of its income. John Knall interprets this as "a direct result of the suit," but Cleo Dolan has a different explanation. The Randolph-Sheppard Act had been amended in 1974, imposing new modes of operation which, according to Dolan, the Society found unacceptable. In any case, several plaintiffs in the suit got their wish and joined the state's program, where the service charge is now computed on a sliding scale based on net profit and only minimal services are rendered to the managers. "It's a far superior program," says Irv Fillinger, one of those affected. "You can make more money and be your own boss. With the Society, you have to accept the fact that they run the business and that you have to do what they tell you to do."

Previous to the termination of its agreement with the state, the Society at one

point actually offered to sell all its stands to the state program for a rumored \$400,000, but decided to hold on to the business when the state could not come up with ready cash for the deal. Goodwin also met with the snack bar managers and attorneys to attempt to arrange an out-of-court settlement of the suit, but that effort collapsed when the plaintiffs, according to Goodwin, demanded that Dolan be ousted, that all the stands be turned over to them, and that the Society remove itself from the food service business for five years.

"If a guy thinks he can do better by himself, we encourage him to go to the bank, get a loan, and buy a business," explains Dolan. "The stands are there for all blind people. They don't belong to the managers. That's why people give them to us. If we gave away our stands or allowed the managers to buy them, that would cut off an opportunity for the blind man coming down the pike. The managers aren't thinking about that. Besides, there's no way most of them could survive if they were operating independently. For one thing, they would no longer be under a nonprofit agency, and I don't know how many of our grantors would want that."

The Federation of the Blind, however, remains unmoved, vowing to take the case to the Supreme Court if necessary. And the Society has been fighting back against what it deems a threat to its existence. Former Society employees say that pro-Federation sentiment is not tolerated at the agency, particularly in its radio reading service programs. Federationists tried unsuccessfully to have the closed-circuit radio station's facilities located outside the Society's Sight Center headquarters at East 101 and Chester, fearing the Society would use the frequency to build its own image. They believe the Society was instrumental in pressuring the Ohio Attorney General's office to stop the Federation's direct-mail fundraising efforts

here two years ago (the Federation had been mailing unordered merchandise and asking for donations, while refusing to register its fundraising operation with the Attorney General or to make the financial reports required by state law. A consent agreement required the Federation to cease the mailings until the state's regulations were complied with). Society employees have received memos encouraging them to report to Dolan any public service announcements for the Federation heard on local radio stations.

In 1975, upon hearing that the Federation had been awarded a \$100,000 grant from the Max C. Fleischman Foundation for the development of a new computerized reading machine for the blind, Dolan fired off a long letter to the Nevada-based foundation attacking the Federation and its philosophy. "We're familiar with Cleo Dolan's tactics," says James Gashel, the Federation's Washington representative. "Like any minority group, we expect reprisals. We expect to be attacked by the established charities." Asked why he would attempt to discourage funding for a project that would benefit all blind people, such as a new reading machine, Dolan replies, "It goes beyond that. It's politics."

"It's taken years for the Society to build up its vested interests," says Bob Waterstradt. "I can understand Cleo Dolan's resentment when someone comes along and says, 'It's wrong—change it.' He has very set ideas about how blind people should act, and he expects total conformity to those ideas. People who come to work at the Society turn into something out of *The Stepford Wives*—they become nice, pleasant robots. They learn to go along with the program. I was one of the few who dared to be a Federationist while I worked at the Society. I was on the fence about joining the Federation before, but that experience taught me that I'd be smothered otherwise." □

STATE CONVENTION REPORTS

The cutbacks in the size of the *Monitor* during the last year have resulted in a backlog of 16 reports of state conventions. There isn't room to print them all in full; but since state activities are a vital part of the work of the organized blind movement, we will devote several pages to excerpts from these reports of state conventions held during 1978.

The convention of the **NFB of Florida** was held in Orlando February 3 to 5, with 83 in attendance. Representing the national organization was Dr. Kenneth Jernigan. A charter of affiliation for the new Broward County Chapter was presented to Charles Thomas, its president.

"Discrimination in Employment: Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, Affirmative Action, and Legal Recourse" was the subject of a panel discussion Saturday afternoon. The panel members were Don McWarren of HEW's Office for Civil Rights; Betty Holzen-dorf, affirmative action officer in Jacksonville; Fred Morris, director of Jacksonville's handicapped employment program; and William Sheppard, the attorney who handled the Michael Zorick case. During another part of the convention, Mr. Sheppard was presented a distinguished service award for his work in this case which won Michael Zorick the right to teach physical education in Florida's public schools.

Other guests at the convention were Don Wedewer, chief of the state division of blind services; and Don Weber, regional librarian. At the business meeting on Sunday, the following officers were elected: Beth Bowen, president; Judith Welch, first vice-president; Barbara Nabutovsky, second vice-president; Maxine Dixon, secretary; James Parkman, treasurer; and new board members John McNally and Gertrude Sitt.

The convention of the **Hawaii Federation of the Blind** was held March 10 to 12 in Honolulu. A busy Saturday agenda included a talk by Karen Radius, of Hawaii's Legal Aid Services, and reports by state president

Warren Toyama and national representative Ralph Sanders. There was lively debate and discussion when the convention heard Beatrice Higuchi, administrator of Hawaii's Ho'opono Services for the Blind. Many of the agency's staff had been invited, and those who attended had an opportunity to hear the friendly but spirited and honest discussion between Federationists and the agency representative.

Many of Hawaii's public officials attended the banquet. Congressman Daniel Akaka and his wife were present, along with representatives of Senator Dan Inouye and Congressman Cecil Heftel, state senator Jean King, and aides of other officials. Helen Nawaa, recently retired transcribing supervisor at the state library for the blind, received the Eva Smyth Award; and scholarships were awarded to Ellen Bosley, Michael Meehan, and Philip Ana.

Warren Toyama was reelected president on Sunday. Filo Tu was elected vice-president; Philip Ana and Norman Ota, secretaries; Amelia Cetrone, treasurer; and the Reverend Arnold Steinbeck, Albert Auyong, Valerie Marino, and Donald Thompson, directors. Hawaii's state convention generated extensive media coverage, including two half-hour color telecasts, more than an hour of radio interviews and presentations, and both advance and follow-up articles in Honolulu's daily newspapers.

The weekend of March 17 to 19 found the historic Blue Bonnet Hotel in San Antonio invaded by enthusiastic, energetic members of the **NFB of Texas**. Warm, friendly hospitality, Texas style, provided by San Antonio area Federationists, a dance the likes of which can only be found in Texas, the winning of the Lowery Organ raffle by Ms. Swindel of San Antonio—all of these blended together to set the pace for the largest and best NFBT convention ever.

Here are some of the highlights: Plans were finalized for a scholarship to a blind student. A blind merchants division was or-

ganized. The Rio Grande Valley Chapter was adopted into the Federation family. PAC plan pledges were increased considerably. Braille copies of the Texas white cane law were available. And a very fine hand-tooled gavel with strike plate was presented to the organization. The election results were as follows: Glenn Crosby, president; Larry Streeter, first vice-president; Louie Vinson, second vice-president; Myrtie Payne, treasurer; Peggie Melton, secretary; Manuel Gonzales, Abbie Hugh Lewis, Tommy Craig, and Sheley Hutchinson, board members. The banquet speaker was state senator Chet Brookes, and the NFB national representative was Dick Edlund.

Federationists departed for their homes on Sunday filled with renewed dedication and a sense of purpose and prepared to go to the barricades whenever and wherever they may be.

Nearly 100 members of the NFB of Virginia gathered in Charlottesville April 7 to 9 for the 1978 convention. Ralph Sanders represented the national movement and delivered the banquet address.

Some of the program highlights were a presentation by Dr. Jean Harris, Virginia's Secretary for Human Resources; presentations about the Kurzweil Reading Machine and the Elifin Digicassette paperless Braille machine; and discussions of state and national legislation. Among the resolutions passed by the convention were ones pledging a commitment to gain state supplementation of SSI, supporting the payment of at least the minimum wage in sheltered workshops, and reaffirming opposition to the NAC accreditation of the Virginia Commission for the Visually Handicapped and to the participation of the Commission's director, William Coppage, in the NAC hierarchy.

The NFBV officers elected this year are Charles Brown, president; Robert (Mac) McDonald, first vice-president; Dawnelle Cruze, second vice-president; Nancy Hoover, recording secretary; Jimmy Nelson, corresponding secretary; and Marion McDonald, treasurer. The NFBV left Charlottesville with the dedication to do what has to be done to keep Virginia right up front on the

barricades.

On April 22, members of the NFB of Mississippi gathered in Jackson for the large-state convention in the last three years. As E. U. Parker wrote: "The program headliner was the same Colonial Insurance executive who spoke at our organizational meeting in 1972—the venerable First Vice-President of the Federation, Don Capps. He and Betty contributed much to the success of our meeting. It would have been the full truth had we published the April *Newsletter* as my secretary first wrote it. As it appeared, it said 'the lovely Betty Capps'; but it was originally typed 'the lovely Princess'—which she is."

Jim Adams, of the Social Security office in Jackson, and the NFBM's own Breland Collier, of the Internal Revenue Service, talked and answered questions Saturday morning. In the afternoon reports were given by Billy Sparkman of Royal Maid and Walter Manser of Mississippi Industries for the Blind. Mr. Manser emphasized the new candle sales program initiated by the NFB.

Stanley Moon and Trudy Vickers of the Mississippi School for the Blind reported on their work with blind children and their families. The only agency not represented was the scandal-ridden Vocational Rehabilitation for the Blind, which continues to show its accountability by boycotting meetings of the NFB. But the Library Commission was present with an interesting and complete report by Joe Forsee, director of the Commission; Gerald Buchanan, assistant director; and Esther Vaughn, the cooperative and excellent librarian of handicapped services. Mrs. Vaughn reported that the number of blind persons being served has climbed from 1,000 to 3,000 in the seven years since the library service was removed from the Louisiana State Library. Wrote E. U.: "Though most of us have a little different idea about how the library should be organized, we want to give three cheers for three people who exhibited such a fine attitude and such a genuine understanding of how to be accountable and responsible."

The 9th annual convention of the NFB of Delaware was held in Wilmington April 29.

President Joseph Spence opened the meeting with the election of officers. Joe has been president of the organization since its founding in 1968; but this year he felt that with his decreased hearing it would be better if he stepped aside. The officers of the NFB of Delaware are now: Mildred Stokes, president; Edward Stokes, first vice-president; Joseph Spence, second vice-president; Joanna Spence, secretary; Geraldine Driver, treasurer; and board members Virginia Davis and Stanley Smith.

The program began with discussions of the problems of blind senior citizens. The speakers were William Megee of the Diamond-Yellow Cab Company; Pat Roche of the state Division of Aging; Art Snyder, assistant for the visually impaired of the Bureau of Aging; and Alice Capadanno, director of adult services for the Bureau for the Visually Impaired. Joanne Ross of Senator William Roth's office was introduced and stated that her assignment was to come and listen to our problems and relay them back to the Senator.

John McCraw was the national representative. He reported on developments at the national level, and he delivered a stirring talk on the Federation. As Joanna Spence wrote: "John described the NFB struggle as a war of survival and likened us unto Armageddon. He spoke of the efforts being made to eradicate the NFB as an effective movement of blind people and the forces that are intent upon destroying us throughout the country. John's talk was an inspiring one and strengthened us all in an avowal of rededication to the movement."

After lunch, Norman Balot, chief of the Bureau for the Visually Impaired, reported on the past year's activities. His talk was followed by many questions from the floor regarding the training programs for the workshop, training programs for the Business Enterprise Program, and prevocational training for teenagers. Jim Burcham, director of vocational rehabilitation for the Bureau, was present with Mr. Balot; and a lively discussion developed. Later Mr. Balot told the group that his new bride, Joan, is an active Federationist from Kentucky.

The meeting heard a report that a bill sponsored by state senator Herman Holloway, which would give divisional status to the Bureau for the Visually Impaired, has passed the senate with a vote of 20 to 0. The bill is now out of committee in the house and has been cosponsored by representative Gilligan.

After a short business meeting, the convention came to a close with a report by Stan Smith on his trip to Norway with the Ski for Light program.

We have reports of two other affiliate conventions held the same weekend as Delaware's—in New Mexico and Washington, D.C.

The NFB of the District of Columbia began its convention Friday night with a business meeting and elections. Elected to office for the next year were Joie Stuart, president; Paul Kay, first vice-president; Charles Fields, second vice-president; Jim Moynihan, secretary; and Arlene Gashel, treasurer. Board members for the next year are Cinda Brown, Reginald Greenwood, Bernetha McLemore, and Harold Snider.

The Saturday program consisted of a series of panel discussions—on rehabilitation, library services, sheltered workshops, and title V of the Rehabilitation Act. For two of the panels, staff members of the Columbia Lighthouse for the Blind had been invited; but one of them called an hour before the session was to start, and a letter from the other came a week later. Since the convention it has come out that the Lighthouse, after waffling for a year, has renewed its NAC accreditation; so we understand why Lighthouse staff members would be reluctant to face the blind.

The national representative was NFB Second Vice-President Rami Rabby, and he delivered a stirring talk to an audience of close to 100 and which included several members of the D.C. City Council. After the speech, one Council member pledged to clear his schedule for discussions with us.

The NFB of New Mexico held its convention April 28 to 30 in Albuquerque. Among the agenda items were an excellent discussion about library services, by Lois McClain, new librarian for the blind; a discussion of

state services for the blind, by Albert Ortiz and several key members of his staff; the report from the NFB National Office by James Omvig; a discussion of the state's low vision aids service; and others.

At the banquet, Jim Omvig discussed the role the NFB can and should play in the life of a blind person. He then stressed the necessity for collective action through the organized blind movement rather than individual action. Mr. Omvig was followed by Senator Pete Domenici, who pledged complete support for the NFB at both the national and state level.

The following were elected to lead the NFB of New Mexico for the next two years: Bryan Banister, president; Pauline Gomez, first vice-president; Joe Maes, second vice-president; Eldon R. Dickson, secretary; Diolinda (Dollie) Dickson, treasurer; and chapter representatives Willard Hughey (Alamogordo), Marilyn Walter (Albuquerque), Ted Barber (Las Cruces), Josie Dean (Las Vegas), Kenneth Kerr (Roswell), and Steve Sandoval (Santa Fe).

The second annual convention of the NFB of New Jersey held May 5, 6, and 7 in Newark, was an outstanding success. As Sharon Kelly reported: "It was a time to learn, a time to celebrate, and a time to plan."

Friday evening was devoted to a board meeting, a resolutions committee meeting, and plenty of hospitality. Saturday morning the convention heard reports from Jim Sofka and John McCraw on the state of the Federation in New Jersey and across the nation. Norma Krajczar, executive director of the state Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired, reported on the plans of the Commission. In the afternoon, panelists Curtis Willoughby, Peggy Pinder, and Ward Biondi discussed what a good orientation center should be—an appropriate topic since the Commission plans to establish a new residential orientation center. Pat Comorato from Pennsylvania discussed the rights of the vocational rehabilitation client.

About the banquet Saturday evening, Sharon Kelly wrote: "We had many things to celebrate. The state attorney general is satisfied and now the NFB can raise funds

in New Jersey. We were privileged to present Helen Hart with the Outstanding Federationist Award. Helen is a dedicated Federationist who worked hard to strengthen our movement. John McCraw, our national representative, gave an inspiring speech. Assemblyman James Barry and many other guests joined us."

On Sunday morning, the following people were elected officers: James Sofka, president; Sharon Kelly, first vice-president; Lewis Griffin, second vice-president; Milford Force, secretary; Ward Biondi, treasurer; and board members Thomas Blume, Albert Calvanelli, and Ken Gould. The NFB is alive and well in New Jersey.

The NFB of Minnesota held its convention the weekend of May 12 to 14 in Minneapolis. Jim Gashel was the national representative. There were two programs on Friday evening, one on directory assistance with Julie Copenhaver of Northwestern Bell, and one on antidiscrimination laws in insurance sales with John Ingrassia, supervisor of the life and health section of the state insurance division.

Saturday morning began with committee reports and reports from chapter presidents. Next on the program was a presentation by Ken Anderson, director of the Vinland National Center. Briefly stated, the Center's goal is to encourage the handicapped to participate in sports and recreational activities. It hopes to provide services to those who require a minimum of staff care to meet their daily needs, and the programs are planned to be rigorous and challenging.

After a discussion of disability insurance and SSI by Marlys Lorensen of the Social Security Administration, new members were admitted, and Joyce Scanlan delivered her presidential report. A panel discussion on library services was chaired by Nadine Jacobson. The other panelists were Federationist Kathy Sullivan, who is a state rehabilitation counselor; Bill Asp, head of the Office of Public Libraries; and Jim Gashel. Of the panelists, only Mr. Asp could not perceive the critical need for a library for the blind to be an integral part of a total service package.

During the afternoon session, Jim Gashel gave a report on national activities; and that evening, he delivered the keynote address at the banquet. During the banquet, an award for distinguished service was presented to Clarence Johnson, NFBM vice-president.

On Sunday morning the state offices up for election were filled as follows: Clarence Johnson was reelected vice-president. Tom Scanlan was reelected treasurer. Elected to two-year terms on the board were Steve Jacobson and Bev Luther.

Summarizing the convention, Curtis Chong wrote: "As our convention ended, it became clear to all of us just how much of a people's movement we really are. Agencies such as NAC, the Minneapolis Society for the Blind, and the American Foundation for the Blind, who seek to do us in, may have much in the way of finances and other 'professional' resources. However, we of the NFB have determination, the will to be free, and thousands of blind people who will take to the streets if necessary to protect their freedom. Both locally and nationally we have never been stronger. Over the years we have accomplished much and will continue to do so. We will achieve the right of the blind shopworker to unionize and to receive the minimum wage. We will achieve better administered rehabilitation and library programs, which are more responsive to our needs. And above all, we will achieve our rightful place in society as fully participating, equal, and self-supporting citizens."

Moving into the summer, we have a report from Laurie Eckery, secretary of the NFB of Nebraska, which held its convention June 16 to 18 in Omaha. Mrs. Eckery reports as follows:

"Our convention schedule was jammed with many interesting reports and panel discussions. Featured speakers included: Jolene Boshart (a blind teacher) reporting on her first year of teaching in a public school and the discrimination uncovered at the end of the year when her contract was not renewed; Doug Boone (former shop instructor at the Orientation and Adjustment Center, Services for the Visually Impaired)

speaking on state government and the blind citizens of Nebraska; Dr. James S. Nyman (Director of Services for the Visually Impaired), who focused on various problems of the blind in addition to vocational concerns which the agency is and will be continuing to deal with; Don Pickering (from the Nebraska School for the Visually Handicapped) speaking on the education of blind children; Rodeane Green (newly appointed director of the Nebraska Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped) giving us the most positive report we've heard in a long time from this library; Richard Parker (project specialist with Radio Talking Book, Inc.) reporting to us on the fine work that is being done at the Radio Talking Book and encouraging us to approach the legislature again with a bill to support statewide radio talking book service by means of a statewide National Public Radio network whose subcarriers could broadcast Radio Talking Book; Barbara Walker (NFB of Nebraska president) presenting her annual report demonstrating a very successful year for the blind of the state. And last but not least, Diane McGeorge, our national representative, spoke to us in her vivacious manner on national matters of concern to us all."

There were also panel discussions on insurance for the blind and on state employment and the blind. Officers elected by the convention are: Marsha Bangert, president; Jim Walker, first vice-president; Laurie Eckery, secretary; and board members John Klingman and Armond Inselman. Barbara Walker will remain on the board as immediate past president.

The following report comes from Pat Estes: "August 12th we gathered in Bangor. We were the NFB of Maine planning and manning our very own convention. For the past few years, the NFB of Maine has been 'organized' every August. The Federation has spent a lot of time and money trying to stir up some excitement in us Yankees. These efforts are now beginning to pay off.

"Some of the dedicated Federationists assembled had driven four hours to attend our five-hour meeting. Our guest speakers were Paul Rourke of the state division of

eye care, and Richard Edlund, representing the NFB National Office.

"We passed a resolution recommending reform in a state voting law that discriminates against the blind and our right to a secret ballot. Mrs. Kate Chapman of Presque Isle was elected a one-year board member. Although we were few in number, we challenge every affiliate, chapter, and member to match our enthusiasm and optimism for the future. The belligerence of our invited guest, Mr. Rourke, only served to prove that the Federation is a necessity in this state.

"Our membership is widely scattered and nearly inaccessible due to the lack of a transit system. We have our work cut out for us in the areas of public relations and legislation. But when we know that clients at the Maine Institution for the Blind receive \$22 for a week's work; when an intelligent young man lacks the confidence to travel alone; when a student's services are threatened because of membership in the NFB, then we know our struggle, our efforts, our cause are valid and true."

The NFB of South Carolina held its 22nd annual convention the weekend of August 18 to 20 in Columbia. Among those who spoke to the convention were Kirkman G. Finlay, the mayor of Columbia; Mr. N. F. Walker, president of the state school for the deaf and blind; O. A. Rosvold, executive director of the South Carolina Lions Sight Conservation Association; and Mrs. Maxine Bowles, the new Commissioner of the South Carolina Commission for the Blind.

Over 300 South Carolinians and some out-of-state guests welcomed NFB President Kenneth Jernigan to the state. At the banquet a number of awards were presented. The Donald C. Capps Award was given to Reba Hancock for her unselfish and enduring service. An Associate Member Honor Award was given to Betty Capps. The NFB of South Carolina Service Award went to representative Joyce Hearn for her efforts in the legislature. The Ellen B. Mack Home Award went to Lou Howell.

Charters of membership were presented to new chapters in Oconee County, Beaufort County, Chester County, and Lancaster.

Senator Strom Thurmond, gubernatorial candidate Dick Riley, state senator Hyman Rubin, state representative Joyce Hearn and others were on hand for the banquet address by President Jernigan. On Sunday, the following were elected to office: Donald C. Capps, president; Robert Bell, first vice-president; Mrs. C. A. Gatlin, second vice-president; Shelia Byrd, secretary; and Marshall Tucker, treasurer.

The 24th annual convention of the NFB of Indiana was held September 29 through October 1 in Evansville. Activities began with the action auction, which raised \$420. Next was a board meeting that focused on how to strengthen chapters.

Jim Omvig represented the NFB National Office; he spoke at the banquet about the need for separate agencies for the blind. State representative Greg Server, who was present, will introduce our commission bill again in the next general assembly. At the banquet, the John Jansen Award was presented to Bettye Baysinger of the Vanderburgh County chapter. The Ray Dinsmore Award was given to Senator Birch Bayh for his leadership in Congress on key NFB issues.

The media was much in evidence, with all three television stations interviewing Jim Omvig, as well as preconvention publicity on radio and in the newspapers, and an article in the Sunday *Courier & Press*.

Evelyn Ray, corresponding secretary of the NFB of Rhode Island, sent this report: "Our keynote speaker was Ralph Sanders, who returned to little Rhody for the third time in less than a year—not to extinguish a fire but to be honored by our Governor at our state convention on September 30. On his last visit, five months ago, Ralph was honored by the general assembly, presented a proclamation by the Governor, and given a reception in the statehouse rotunda where many of the high-ranking legislators paid tribute to him. At this convention, Governor Garrahy designated Ralph Sanders an honorary citizen of Rhode Island in the presence of U.S. Senator Claiborne Pell and Congressman Edward P. Beard, as well as state senators William A. Castro and Richard McAllister."

At the convention, Senator Pell received a citation, and Governor Garrahy received the NFB of Rhode Island Presidential Award. One of the highlights of the meeting was the spirited address of Peggy Pinder, president of the NFB Student Division. Ralph Sanders and Father Sabourin installed the newly elected officers: Ken Brackett, president; Marcel LaRivera, first vice-president; Harold Brown, second vice-president; Steve Garabedian, treasurer; Mary Jane Fry, secretary; and Evelyn Ray, corresponding secretary. The board members are Louie DeFelice, Charlie Brown, Cathy Amaral, and Dr. Hayvis Woolf. Excellent coverage was given by the news media both before and after the convention.

The convention of the NFB of New York State took place October 6 to 8 in Syracuse. There were two guests at the convention reporting on the national movement—Kenneth Jernigan and Peggy Pinder. After his report, President Jernigan persuaded the convention to increase their PAC pledges

a total of \$218 per month—moving New York from 11th to 6th place among the states.

The agenda included a panel on agencies for the blind, and a legislative speaker—Congressman James Hanley. Audrey Smith, the new regional librarian, spoke about her new facilities; and Barbara Blum, head of the state Commission for the Blind and Visually Handicapped, promised full cooperation and assistance.

Sunday was devoted to reports from affiliate committees and officers. In his report, state president Sterling France said: "When I was elected, I set forth four goals for us: (1) to increase the membership; (2) to raise funds; (3) to pass our commission bill; and last and not least, and they need not be in this order, (4) making the commission respond to the real needs of its—as they want to call it—clients." This convention found the NFB of New York State strong and united and moving steadily toward its goals. □

RECIPE OF THE MONTH

by FRANKLIN VANVLIET

Note: Franklin VanVliet, member of the NFB of New Hampshire, is well known to Federationists as our former NFB National Treasurer.

BAKED STUFFED SHRIMP CASSEROLE

Ingredients

2-1/2 pounds large, deveined shrimp (U-10 shrimp)
 2 cups Ritz cracker crumbs
 1 pound cooked lobster meat
 1 pound sharp cheddar cheese
 1/2 pound butter
 2 cups or more milk
 1 teaspoon salt (approximately)

Put the shrimp in the bottom of a large ovenware casserole dish. Grind the cheese and mix it with the cracker crumbs and one quarter pound of butter. Blend in the lobster meat and then cover the shrimp with this mixture, adding about two cups of milk—enough to make the casserole mixture wet but not thin. Add the salt. Add the rest of the butter, placing pieces of it around on top of the casserole. Add more milk for moisture, if needed.

Cover the casserole and bake for an hour in a 350 degree oven. During the last ten minutes of cooking, remove the cover. This will serve 6 to 8 people generously. □

MONITOR MINIATURES □□□□□□

□ We are now ready to handle orders for NFB materials in the new National Office in Baltimore. The address to use is National Federation of the Blind, 1101 Saint Paul Street, Suite 412, Baltimore, Maryland 21202. As was announced in the last issue of the *Monitor*, this is also the address to use for address changes or other letters dealing with *Monitor* subscriptions.

□ Please send the names and addresses of new chapter or state affiliate officers to the National Office as soon as they are elected. It would be helpful if you would also include the exact and correct name of the chapter, so our files can be kept up to date.

□ When filling out Member-at-Large forms for the Associates program, it would be a great help if you would put your state as well as your name on the line labeled "NFB Representative." Now that so many are enrolling members at large, it will save time to

have this information.

□ The NFB Board of Directors meeting traditionally held during the Thanksgiving holiday was postponed. It will instead be held early this year. The reason for this is that the remodeling of the new building in Baltimore has progressed rapidly, and the plan is for the board meeting to be held in the building and include a tour of the new facilities.

□ The NFB Hikeathon-Bikeathon Committee met in Baltimore the weekend of December 9th to make plans for hikeathons and bikeathons. These fundraising projects have been very successful in the past. If your affiliate or chapter is interested in holding one of these, contact Ramona Walhof, chairman of the committee. Her address is 4111 Fortieth Street, Des Moines, Iowa 50310.

□ The NFB of California was reorganized on November 18 at a meeting held in San Francisco. Sharon Gold of Lancaster was

elected president of the affiliate.

□ Ray Prinsen, president of the NFB of Vermont, suffered a serious heart attack recently. The latest reports, however, indicate that Ray is recovering smoothly. We send our best wishes for a full and rapid return to good health.

□ The Hadley School for the Blind, in Winnetka, Illinois, now has a toll-free telephone number. The number is (800) 323-4238, except for residents of Illinois. Illinoisans should call (800) 942-4193.

□ Mary Ellen Halverson, second vice-president of the NFB of Idaho, writes as follows: "An exciting thing happened in Idaho on Saturday, November 18, in Twin Falls. Our newest NFB of Idaho chapter was organized and is named the Magic Valley Chapter. Dick Jones, state membership chairman, made the arrangements for the meeting; and with a great deal of help from Anna Cammack and Mike Blackaller of the Twin Falls area, we are starting out with a great bunch of new members. Several of us from Boise,

including state president Norm Gardner, attended this first meeting and helped introduce everyone to the NFB, our goals and beliefs. The following were elected officers: Walt Hine, president; Catherine Ward, vice-president; Doris Rutherford, secretary; and Anna Cammack, treasurer. Some of our members from Pocatello also came to the meeting bringing their valuable support and encouragement. What better Christmas gift to ourselves, the organized blind of this state, than a new and enthusiastic chapter!"

□ Bob and Jennie Mahoney wish to announce that Mahoney's Gift House has its 1978-79 Braille gift catalog now available. It lists over 200 items. To obtain the catalog, mail \$1 to Mahoney's Gift House, 1285 Carriage Way North, East Lansing, Michigan 48823.

□ On December 13, a fire destroyed much of the Lord Baltimore Hotel, the site of our 1978 Convention. Early reports indicate that as many as five floors of the building may have been destroyed. □

THE BRAILLE MONITOR
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